

Message Text

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22

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FM AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5732

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, SOPN, ASEAN, SN

SUBJ: RAJARATNAM ATTACKS WESTERN MARXIST SYMPATHIZERS

REF: SINGAPORE 3299

1. FOREIGN MINISTER RAJARATNAM USED JULY 7 OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE PACIFIC FORUM CONFERENCE ON THE ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL GROWTH PATTERN OF ASIA-PACIFIC TO AGAIN DERIDE THE AURA OF INVINCIBILITY AROUND THE COMMUNIST THREATS TO ASEAN. HOWEVER, NOW STANDARD THEME (REFTEL) WAS VARIED SOMEWHAT PRESUMABLY IN ORDER TO SUIT HIS AUDIENCE AND TO TOUCH ON OTHER POINTS PRESENTLY IN VOGUE WITHIN GOS.

2. RAJA FIRST CONCENTRATED ON THE RELATIVE STABILITY OF THE ASEAN BLOC. AFTER HIGHLIGHTING THE INSTABILITY OF THE MIDDLE EAST AND AFRICA, HE DWELT AT LENGTH WITH THE POTENTIAL OF COMMUNIST ELECTORAL VICTORIES IN WESTERN EUROPE. HE ARGUED THAT THERE IS MORE REASON TO FEAR A COMMUNIST TAKEOVER THERE THAN IN ASEAN.

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3. RAJA THEN SHIFTED HIS ATTACK TO THE EUROPEAN SOCIALIST

MOVEMENTS. HE STATED THAT THE COMMUNISTS IN SOVIET UNION AND CHINA HAD "FRATERNAL RELATIONS" WITH ASEAN COMMUNIST PARTIES, YET NEVER PROTESTED THEIR MEMBERS' INCARCERATIONS. HE HIGHLIGHTED THE HYPOCRISY OF AN ALLEGED ANTI-COMMUNIST MOVEMENT, THE SOCIALIST INTERNATIONAL, IN BECOMING A FORUM FOR CHARGES THAT SINGAPORE HAS "POLITICAL PRISONERS". HE EXPRESSED BELIEF THAT "COMMUNIST DETAINEES" WAS THE CORRECT EXPRESSION AND THAT THOSE WHO ARGUED FOR THEIR RELEASE WERE SABOTAGING THE ANTI-COMMUNIST REGIMES. HE WENT ON AT GREAT LENGTH ABOUT LIBERAL PRO-MARXIST WESTERN EUROPEANS ENGAGING IN NEO-COLONIALIST ATTITUDES WHEN THEY DENIED SINGAPORE THE RIGHT TO AN ASIAN FORM OF SOCIALISM THAT, IN ESSENCE, ENCOMPASSED STRONG ANTI-COMMUNISM AND AVOIDANCE OF WESTERN LIBERAL WEAKNESS.

4. RAJA FINALLY CONCLUDED BY STRESSING THE FALSEHOOD OF A PICTURE OF A "DISPARATE, DISUNITED AND CONTENDING ASEAN BLOC" AS COMPARED TO A TRIUMPHANT WAVE-OF-THE-FUTURE INDOCHINESE COMMUNIST MOVEMENT. HE HIGHLIGHTED INDOCHINESE DISUNITY AND ASSERTED THAT THESE STATES WERE FAR LESS INTEGRATED THAN THOSE OF ASEAN, AND FAR FROM INEVITABLY VICTORIOUS.

5. COMMENT: IN CONTRAST TO THE GLOOMY PESSIMISM OVER THE FUTURE OF THAILAND AND MALAYSIA EXPRESSED BY THE PRIME MINISTER PRIVATELY TO HIGH-LEVEL AMERICAN VISITORS OVER THE PAST SEVERAL MONTHS, RAJA SOUNDED A HEARTY UPBEAT NOTE IN THE LAST PART OF HIS SPEECH, EXPRESSING CONFIDENCE THAT ASEAN WAS MORE UNITED AND ECONOMICALLY FAR MORE ADVANCED THAN THE INDOCHINA STATES AND STOOD A GOOD CHANCE OF STANDING UP UNDER COMMUNIST PRESSURES. ALTHOUGH THE GOS CONTINUES TO BE PESSIMISTIC ABOUT THE COMMUNIST THREAT TO ITS NORTHERN NEIGHBORS, RAJA UNDOUBTEDLY BELIEVES THAT THERE IS LITTLE TO BE GAINED BY PUBLICIZING ITS CONCERN. UNFORTUNATELY, RAJA DWELT EXCESSIVELY, DEFENSIVELY AND AT TIMES UNCONVINCINGLY ON BOTH THE INIQUITIES OF WESTERN INTELLECTUALS IN THE SOCIALIST INTERNATIONAL AND ELSEWHERE AND THE GREATER LIKELIHOOD OF COMMUNIST SUCCESSES IN WESTERN EUROPE THAN IN SOUTHEAST ASIA. ALTHOUGH THIS EXTENSIVE HARANGUE WAS LARGELY WASTED ON MANY IN HIS AUDIENCE WHO HAD HEARD THIS LINE BEFORE, MOST OF THE FOREIGN BUSINESSMEN PRESENT APPRECIATED HIS FORTHRIGHT ANTI-COMMUNIST STANCE AND FOUND IT REFRESHING THAT A SOUTHEAST ASIAN STATESMAN WOULD BE SO OUTSPOKEN. HOLDRIDGE

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